

NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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DOC takes aggressive action to combat cluster of COVID cases at one correctional facility

Dover, DE -- The DOC today announced that it is taking aggressive measures to combat a cluster of inmate COVID-19 cases that was identified late last week at its prison facility in Georgetown. [On Friday, the DOC announced that after six weeks with no inmates testing positive for COVID-19 in any of the state's correctional facilities, proactive monitoring revealed a new cluster of positive cases among the inmate population at Sussex Correctional Institution \(SCI\).](#) These cases are the first at SCI since the COVID pandemic began.

"The Delaware Department of Correction has demonstrated it can contain and treat COVID-19 in our correctional facilities, and we are taking all necessary measures to prevent further spread of the illness at Sussex Correctional Institution," **Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said**. "We are employing all of the tools at our disposal to get ahead of its potential spread, including moving inmates with underlying health issues to other facilities, opening a COVID Treatment Center at SCI and expanding testing of asymptomatic inmates and staff."

Last week, after three inmates at SCI showed symptoms of COVID-19 infection and tested positive for the illness, the DOC immediately initiated contact tracing to identify, isolate and proactively test individuals who came into sustained contact with these inmates. After new inmate test results were received, additional mitigation measures were implemented on top of DOC's existing rigorous COVID protocols, including:

- All inmates in the housing units in which the COVID-positive inmates had been assigned were quarantined and began receiving twice daily temperature checks, screenings for symptoms and pulse oxygen level testing.
- All SCI inmates were issued face masks.
- In-person visitation at SCI was suspended as a precaution to protect inmates and staff from transmission of the illness.
- Voluntary COVID-19 testing is being offered to all SCI staff in recognition that the greatest threat to correctional institutions remains transmission from the community.
- Additional deep cleanings are being conducted, including decontamination of housing units with specialized fogging machines.

Today the DOC announced that the following additional mitigation measures are being taken at SCI:

- All programming is being temporarily suspended for one week in an effort to restrict movement across the facility. Inmates will continue to be provided recreation time, including in outside recreation areas.
- SCI is not accepting any new commits on a temporary basis.
- All SCI inmates, approximately 900 individuals, are being tested for the illness.

Fifty-eight SCI inmates have currently tested positive for COVID-19, **including 48 who are asymptomatic of illness** and 10 who are symptomatic. 51 have been transferred to DOC's COVID-19 Treatment Center at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center, 4 are being treated in the prison infirmary, and 3 are being treated in stable condition in area hospitals.

Additionally, the DOC has temporarily suspended in-person visitation at Baylor Women's Correctional Institution (BWCI) out of an abundance of caution after two contract healthcare workers at the facility tested positive for COVID-19. Two additional BWCI healthcare contract workers have COVID-19 test results pending. All BWCI inmates are being carefully monitored, including twice-daily temperature checks. No BWCI inmates have tested positive for the illness, and none are registering symptoms of COVID-19.

Currently across all correctional facilities, 11 DOC staff and 2 healthcare contractors have tested positive for COVID-19, while 87 DOC staff and healthcare contractors assigned to DOC facilities have recovered from the illness. No additional information will be provided about the identity of the inmates or staff members for privacy protection.

Review an informational chart of COVID-19 recoveries and cases among DOC employees, contracted staff and inmates for each DOC facility [by clicking HERE](#).

The DOC continues to employ a variety of prevention, screening, cleaning and containment measures to guard against the spread of the novel coronavirus, including:

- All persons, including Officers, administrative staff and probationers who enter any Level V prison, Level IV violation of probation or work release center, or Probation and Parole Office are screened for COVID-19, including a series of questions and a forehead temperature check with a thermometer
- Staff who present with symptoms are sent home to self-quarantine and directed to contact their health care provider.
- Newly arriving inmates are held in isolation for the first 14 days, during which they are carefully monitored, including daily temperature checks with a thermometer.
- DOC has implemented extra daily cleaning of DOC facilities and is using specialized fogging machines to disinfect entire rooms of common areas, housing units and workspaces.
- Face masks are being worn by Correctional Officers and contract healthcare workers as a protection for inmates, Officers and other employees. All Correctional Officers have been wearing face masks since April 10.

- **Face masks have been provided to more than two-thirds of DOC's inmate population, including inmates who are in infirmaries, those with compromised immune systems, those with certain institutional jobs, such as food service, all inmates at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center, Sussex Correctional Institution, Morris Community Corrections Center and the Sussex Community Corrections Center, and nearly 250 inmates at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution.**

Certain programs, including treatment and education programs and religious programming, have been transitioned to a virtual video format. Inmates continue to have outside recreation opportunities within their confined areas and continue to have access to phones to stay in regular contact with their loved ones. DOC is also expanding the use of electronic tablets among the inmate population, where available.

Get updated information about the DOC's response to COVID-19 and read previous announcements of positive COVID-19 cases by visiting <https://doc.delaware.gov>, and follow *decorrection* on Facebook and Twitter.